

Revolutionary Poems in the Struggle Against Colonialism



Timorese Nationalist Verse
Fransisco Borja da Costa

**REVOLUTIONARY POEMS
IN THE STRUGGLE
AGAINST COLONIALISM**



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Fransisco Borja da Costa

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Dedication

To the memory of my dear comrades Fransisco Borja da Costa, Goinxet Bernardino Bonaparte, Rosa Muki Bonaparte, and to Fernandô Carmo, who all died in Dili on that terrible day, December 7, 1975.

Introduction by Jill Jolliffe

How does a Timorese revolutionary intellectual think? What forces have shaped his/her development?

The author of this small collection of poems, Fransisco Borja da Costa, was born in Fatu Berliu on the south coast of East Timor on October 14, 1946. The outline of his development traces a path common to many of the leaders of modern Timorese nationalism.

An analysis of this development has been offered by a peer and comrade of Borja da Costa's, Abilio de Araujo. In his work *Timorese Elites*¹, de Araujo describes the creation of elites by Portuguese colonialism, in which a section of the traditional local power holders is cultivated to implant and strengthen colonial power. The writer traces the development of the elite, through education, to the present day. He concludes: '... this policy, like many others, can prove to be a double-edged sword. This group of responsible civil servants, promoted because of their acceptance of colonialism's values ... may be its best ally, but may also turn out to be its greatest enemy.'² The leadership of Timor's nationalist movement, the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (FRETILIN)³ is largely drawn from the ranks of just this rebel elite, from people who saw their historic role differently from that selected

for them by the Portuguese.

Borja da Costa was born the son of the *liurai* (traditional chief) of Same. Like a number of other FRETILIN leaders, including President Xavier do Amaral and Prime Minister Nicolau Lobato, Borja da Costa was educated at the Jesuit primary college at Soibada and at the seminary at Dare, behind Dili. In 1964 he left the seminary to take up employment in the Portuguese administration. From 1968-71 he did obligatory national service training with the Portuguese army, stationed at Laclubar in the interior. He described his military training as a 'good experience' because he gained confidence to speak out against racial discrimination. He returned to government service after the army; from this position he was able to observe the censorship process in action under the Portuguese; as well, he undertook a private study of discrimination against Timorese in employment practices.

Around 1970 an illegal anti-colonialist group was formed in Dili by a number of Timorese who were later to emerge as the leadership of FRETILIN. Borja's participation in this group was his first conscious political act.

As a child the young writer was taught to read, like all Timorese, in Portuguese. His own language — Tetum — has been written only by anthropologists and missionaries. The Tetum which is Borja's natural tongue, and the language of his poems, is Tetum Terik, the 'high' or 'classical' Tetum of the south coast. Despite lack of access to a written form of his own language, Borja began to read voraciously in Portuguese, around the age of 13-14, and then to write. He expressed the wish to become a schoolteacher, which his father rejected, on the grounds that his ideas were 'too wild.' His first poems were what he described as 'subjective' poetry. In the late sixties his ideas reached a stage of ferment and he began to think about the subjugation of Timorese life under Portuguese rule.

The political repression and isolation under which the emerging nationalist movement operated in this period was not only complete, but tightening, as events moved towards April 25, 1974. The political stirring of the Timorese roughly

coincided with events in Europe: in 1968 students and workers had taken to the streets in Paris, Italy, England and Prague, but the cocoon in which the Portuguese fascist regime kept their South East Asian colony wrapped was total. Fransisco Borja da Costa and his dissident friends had no knowledge of 1968. Political orthodoxy in the colonies, as in Lisbon, was maintained by the activity of PIDE agents, secret police who infiltrated every institution of private and public life. In this period they moved against a Church newspaper, *Seara*, which had become a focus for dissidents. Xavier do Amaral, Nicolau Lobato, and a Portuguese poet and supporter of Timorese nationalism, Inácio de Moura were contributors to the debate around the nature of East Timorese society which developed before its closure by PIDE. Borja was not himself a contributor to *Seara*, but followed its course with interest.

Although a participant in the illegal political group, Borja did not consider his real politicization to have occurred until he went to Lisbon in September 1973. There he worked and lived with other Timorese of the Casa dos Timorenses, a centre for Timorese nationalists abroad. In his own words, he was 'politically oriented' by more radical Timorese. He was in Lisbon at the time of the so-called 'flower revolution' of April 25, 1974, which had a profound effect not only on Timor itself, but on Timorese expatriates in Portugal. On the formation of the first legal organised political expression of Timorese nationalism, the ASDT (Associação Social Democrática Timorense, later to become FRETILIN), the activists of the Casa dos Timorenses immediately sent a cable of solidarity to Dili. Perhaps most important was the access to formerly banned literary works which they now had. Borja devoured works by progressive writers which were to shape his ideas. He described the most important of these influences as Bertolt Brecht, Pablo Neruda, Maxim Gorky, 'Marxist works' and the poems of Mao Tsetung.

After April 25 the Lisbon Timorese worked in co-ordination with the ASDT in Timor, on developing a political programme. In mid-1974 Abílio de Araújo returned to Timor to work with FRETILIN leaders on a campaign to eradicate illiteracy — only

about ten per cent of the population were then literate. The 'alphabetization' of Tetum was a main priority and de Araujo returned to Lisbon to prepare the printing of literacy handbooks for use in schools established by FRETILIN in the far reaches of the countryside. As well, he and Borja da Costa worked together to create poems and songs expressing the long-suppressed national sentiment of their people. They worked from traditional songs, Abilio de Araujo providing the music, and Borja da Costa the lyrics. The first of these was 'Foho Ramelau,' which came to be known as the 'revolutionary hymn' of FRETILIN, and was written soon after April 25. Taught by FRETILIN through the literacy programme, it is known and sung by Timorese throughout the territory.

A contradiction was set up by the fact that the spur for Timorese nationalism had come from this rebel educated elite. Conscious awareness of this contradiction has been an asset: it was precisely the most urbanised and developed of the Timorese nationalists who led the drive into the remote parts of the interior to establish the literacy schools and who led the search for reconciliation with their own culture, examining the folklore and reviving and propagating the traditional songs. The 'Maubere' of the FRETILIN songs refers to the illiterate mountain people, despised under the Portuguese regime. Under the FRETILIN regime, the Maubere became a symbol of national pride, in what young radical Timorese describe as their quest for 'pure democracy.'

The contradiction is also expressed within Borja's writing, which fuses the traditional form with modern nationalist themes. In the poem 'O Povo Maubere Não Pode Ser Escravo de Mais Ninguém' he employs images of the most fundamental aspect of daily life: the planting of the rice, to call for national freedom. Rice-growing in Timor utilises a method unique to the region, in which the buffalo is used not to pull a plough, but to trample the paddies and break the clods of soil preparatory to planting:

We must
from this

trodden
trampled soil
create
a new person
and:

We must
irrigate
this soil
with sweat,
with love
fertilise it

The poems published here fall into two categories. The main group is from a typescript folio prepared by Borja da Costa in October 1975, entitled 'Revolutionary poems in the struggle against colonialism.' The two appended poems, including the national anthem of the Democratic Republic of East Timor, were written after that date. Of the nine poems, five were written in Portuguese. The others, in Tetum Terik, were written accompanied by a free translation in Portuguese.

Why, one might ask, should a Timorese nationalist write in Portuguese, the language of the colonialist? The assistance and example of the African nationalist movement has been a great asset to the Timorese. Not only do the people of East Timor, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, San Tomé-Príncipe, Mozambique and Angola have a common history — they have a common language and can thus exchange and grow from their mutual experience of anti-colonialism. They also have supporters in Portugal, who it is important to reach. There is no doubt that Borja da Costa would have read the poetry of African nationalist writers like Agostinho Neto, Jorge Rebelo and José Craveirinha.⁴ Nonetheless, in terms of the development of the movement in East Timor itself and of an understanding of Timorese culture, the works in Tetum must be regarded as the most valuable.

In the introduction to the above-quoted anthology of African nationalist verse, Margaret Dickinson points out that most of the writers are people involved in daily political struggle: 'It is

not an accident that Agostinho Neto, perhaps Angola's greatest living poet, is also president of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). For there can be no national literature until there are citizens of the nation to read or hear it . . . In such a situation the poet's vision is likely to make him first and foremost a revolutionary; his poetry, when he can steal the time to write it, will be the expression of this revolution in which his life is spent.'⁵

These poems are very much a product of political struggle, for daily use. In the period of intense political activity in East Timor following the right wing UDT coup of August 11, the writers and musicians of FRETILIN were hard at work: revolutionaries were poets, poets were revolutionaries. At the front at Batugadé in late September, the soldiers of FALINTIL⁶ passed around a poem written by their commander Rogerio Lobato, exhorting them to an unyielding defence of their homeland. In the streets of Dili soldiers at their guard posts knocked out street poems and political tracts which became wall posters. 'O Grito do Soldado Maubere' was written by Borja da Costa in the early days of September. Civil fighting in Dili had just ceased — the poem was to appear in the first issue of the new national newspaper *Timor Leste*, on September 27, 1975. From September until December 7 there were ten issues of the newspaper and in that period the poets of the Central Committee — Sha'a Na Na, Maria Olandina F. C. Alves, Inácio de Moura, Francisco Borja da Costa — worked to a weekly deadline, producing songs and poems of inspiration and explanation.

It should be borne in mind by the reader that most of the poems printed here are meant to be spoken or sung: the printed form does not do them justice. They are written primarily for an illiterate people, who operate from a rich oral tradition in which the words are not generally fixed, but can change according to the circumstances of performance. The effective use of radio communication has been a key weapon in the FRETILIN arsenal, in reaching and politicizing people in the villages. From September to December 1975, Radio Maubere

broadcast traditional Timorese music every day, including some of these songs.

The particular contribution of Fransisco Costa da Borja lies in his sensitive fusion of traditional forms with nationalist ideas. The problems of regional and tribal divisions, divisions fostered and fanned by the Portuguese, are never ignored. Thus in songs like 'Foho Ramelau' there is a constant focusing from the local to the general, from the particular to the universal, from the village to the nation:

Loke matan loro foun to'o iha ó knuak
Loke matan loro foun iha ita rain

Open your eyes! A new sun is over your village
Open your eyes! A new sun is over our land

And in the beautiful 'Kdadalak,' the people of the villages and regions, isolated and helpless alone, are compared to the many streams of Timor:

Kdadalak suli mutuk fila ué inan
Ué inan tan malu sá ben ta'han

Streams flowing together become rivers
Rivers increase, whatever opposes them

Nanu'u timur oan sei hamutuk
Hamutuk atu tahan anin sut taci

So must the children of Timor unite,
Unite against the wind that blows from the sea

The 'wind that blows from the sea' is the wind of colonial exploitation, which the people can only resist if they act as one.

Professor James J. Fox has described the function of *parallelisms* in traditional Timorese writing, the 'carefully contrived pairing of line, phrase and verse.' The phenomenon

of parallelism is characteristic of many oral literatures and is general to South East Asia. He illustrates the point by reference to a Rotinese (West Timorese) ritual chant, describing 'the hunting of wild pig . . . the origin of fire and cooking, and of the obtainment, by exchange, of the material implements of culture.'⁷ The text runs thus:

Ala sopu lai basa dae
Ala fule lai basa oe.

They hunt throughout the land
They track throughout the waters.

Leu Ledo lasi nana-papadak

They enter the Sun's forbidden forest

Ma Bulan nula nana-babatak
Ma lala meo dei pana-foe
Ma kue dei iko-fula,
Bulan kue nana-mao
Ma Ledo meo naka-boi-nai.

And the Moon's restricted wood
And catch a pied-nosed cat
And a white-tailed civet,
The Moon's fond civet
And the Sun's tame cat.

'Hunt' is paralleled with 'track,' 'land' with 'waters,' Sun's forbidden forest' with 'Moon's restricted wood,' and so on.

From an examination of 'Foho Ramelau' and 'Kdadalak' it can be seen that Borja's poetry stands squarely in the classical tradition. The parallelisms operate in many ways: within lines as well as between lines, sometimes between stanzas. The insistent drum-like repetition that characterises the parallel is often used to create dramatic effect or irony which hinges on

the changed form. The driving questioning of 'Kolele Mai':

Sá sá ha'a nalo ó batar la fulin
Sá sá ha'a nalo ó hare la burit

What is it that makes your corn not grow?
What is it that makes your rice not flower?

leads through explanations of self-blame:

Balu dehan ó baruk balu katak ó beik

Some say you are lazy, some say you are stupid

to the hint of external responsibility:

balu tatak ó kiak

. . . others say it is poverty

to the final pointed question of specific responsibility:

Sá sá ha'a nalo?
Sé sé sé lós sé?

What is the reason for it?
Who, who, is truly responsible?

The form of 'Kolele Mai' is a specific traditional form of the Baucau region. The refrain is not translatable, although 'Kolele' appears to be a mythical figure invoked in the 'Kolele Mai' form. 'Kdadalak' is drawn from a traditional dance form, the *tebe*.

The images and textures of Borja da Costa's writing, like those in the Rotinese epic cited above, are grounded in the rich, earthy lore of village life, of the material things of the countryside and every day activity. For this reason, and to retain the spirit of the parallelisms, the translations from the Tetum Terik

are relatively literal translations. (No attempt has been made here to translate them as songs.) It may be more poetic and elliptical to say 'Open your eyes! A new day has dawned in your village,' but the more literal translation 'Open your eyes! A new sun is over your village' seems to express the sensuous immediacy that is lost in the first. The images of the sprouting corn, the dozing chickens, the cruel bitter wind from the sea tearing at the peasant's flimsy garment provide faithful pictures of the diverse beauty, if harshness, of traditional Timorese life. The fight of the nationalists is the fight to preserve and develop the traditional culture while working to provide freedom from poverty, illiteracy and colonial exploitation, freedom which can only come through unity.

From late August until December 1975, East Timor was governed on a de facto basis by FRETILIN, following a brief period of civil fighting in which the Portuguese administration fled the mainland of the territory. Despite the actuality of FRETILIN rule, it was not until November 28, when Indonesian regular forces were pushing in greater and greater strength over the border, that independence was declared. The government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor which was proclaimed on that day formed the first national government in East Timorese history.

Francisco Borja da Costa was not a military man; he was like a gentle deer, the *bibi rusa* which the Timorese love to hunt in the mountains. As Secretary for Information on FRETILIN's Central Committee his task was to propagate ideas. After independence he hoped to study 'ethnology and linguistics.' In those three months he sometimes came to my hotel, to engage in shy conversation. Huddled over a beer, we talked in mutually broken Portuguese and English. Timor was a small country, he used to say, too tiny for the superpowers to care about. Their policies were based on expediency, and it was not expedient to offend Indonesia for the sake of a small people. Timorese would surely have to fight for themselves. It was clear Australia would not help; illusions were dangerous.

On December 7, 1975, just nine days after East Timor had

declared itself independent, Indonesian regular forces landed in Dili, the capital. Around four to six thousand troops are believed to have landed under cover of air and sea bombardment. Australian relief workers on the neighbouring island of Atauro described the bombardment as they witnessed it from 30 kilometres away: 'At one stage we saw a bright burning mass which lasted for about 45 minutes. We had good binoculars and could see the flame, but it was clearly visible with the naked eye from 30 kms away. The smoke was going up in columns and covering all Dili. The sky was stained with smoke for about 2-3 kms around . . . It continued until we couldn't see any more – we left at 6.30 p.m.' As they watched the burning they listened to Radio Australia at hourly intervals. The newscasts were quoting the Jakarta government saying that 'peace and stability' had been restored in Dili.

At the rear of the city a Minister of the new republic broadcast out of Dili hospital for the first 48 hours of the bombardment. Alarico Fernandes told of wave upon wave of paratroopers being dropped into the capital and of the execution of civilians in the street.

Letters smuggled out of the territory since December 7 have told of horrifying massacres of civilians; free from foreign observation, Indonesian troops engaged in an orgy of killing.

On that day Fransisco Borja da Costa, the poet who wrote of all the beautiful things of Timor, of the spiralling mountain peaks, of the chickens in the *knuas* (villages), of the rivers which divided and re-united endlessly, the man who had written:

Torture my body
With the chains of your empire
Subjugate my soul
With the faith of your religion

was mutilated and murdered by Indonesian paratroopers. He was aged 30. The message which reached Australia on January 4, broadcast by Alarico Fernandes stated: 'The Javanese killed Borja with barbarities because they said he was a Communist.'

The tragedy of Borja's death is the tragedy that has befallen all of the people of East Timor. Four months after the assault on Dili, FRETILIN forces are still waging a resistance struggle. These poems are offered here in the hope that they will lead the reader to a consideration of the interesting and intricate culture of East Timor, and of the wider struggle being fought by the nationalist movement. Francisco Borja da Costa had barely begun to speak when his voice was silenced: his development as a writer was still before him. These poems are not the property of any one person. Inspired by Borja, they are the songs of the East Timorese, to be used and propagated as a weapon of their struggle.

— April 1976.

Acknowledgments:

Thanks to Professor James Fox for his provision of background material on Timorese culture, while absolving him from responsibility for the finished product, to Abilio de Araujo for his assistance and the provision of notes to the poems and to my friends for their loyal support in recent months.

Notes:

1. Abilio de Araujo, *Timorese Elites*, (Canberra, 1975).
2. *ibid*, p.6.
3. Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente.
4. Margaret Dickinson's anthology *When Bullets begin to Flower: Poems of Resistance from Angola, Mozambique and Guiné* (East African Publishing House, Kenya, 1972) is an excellent introduction to the poetry of the African nationalists, with the limitation that it is restricted to works first written in the Portuguese.
5. *ibid*, p.9.
6. Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor).
7. James J. Fox, 'On Binary Categories and Primary Symbols: Some Rotinese Perspectives' (Malaby Press, 1975, reprinted from ASA studies, *The Interpretation of Symbolism*, ed. Roy Willis), p.101.

Explanatory notes on the individual poems are grouped together at the end of the book.

Revolutionary Poems in the Struggle Against Colonialism

Poesias Revolucionárias e de Luta Contra o Colonialismo

Foho Ramelau

Eh! Foho Ramelau, Foho Ramelau eh!
Sá bé ás liu ó tutun, sá bé bein liu ó lolon eh!
Tan sá timur oan hakruk bei-beik?
Tan sá timur oan atan bei-beik?

I
Tan sá timurulun sudur uai-uain?
Tan sá timur oan ata uai-uain?

II
Hader rai-hun mutin ona lá!
Hader loro foun sa'e ona lá!

III
Loke matan loro foun to'o iha ó knuak
Loke matan loro foun iha ita rain

IV
Hader kaer rasik kuda talin eh!
Hader ukun rasik ita rain eh!

Tradução Livre:

Oh! Monte Ramelau, Monte Ramelau!
Que é que é mais alto que o teu oume!
Que é que é mais magestoso que a tua imponência!

I
Porque é que a cabeça do timor há-de curvar-se eternamente?
Porque é que o timor há-de ser escravo para sempre?

II
Acorda que a madrugada já desponta
Acorda que o novo sol já desponta

III
Abre os olhos que o novo dia já chegou à tua aldeia
Abre os olhos que o novo dia já chegou à nossa terra

IV
Acorda e segura tu próprio as rédas
Acorda e governemos nós próprios a nossa terra

Mount Ramelau

Eh! Mount Ramelau, Mount Ramelau,eh!
What is higher than your peak?
What is greater than your majesty?

I

Why, Timor, is your head forever bowed?
Why, Timor, are your children enslaved?
Why, Timor, do your children doze like chickens?
Why, Timor, do your children doze like slaves?

II

Awake! The foot of the mountain is white
Awake! A new sun has risen

III

Open your eyes! A new sun is over your village
Open your eyes! A new sun is over our land

IV

Awake! Take the reins of your own *kuda*
Awake! Take command of our own land!

O Rasto Da Tua Passagem

(Poesia sobre a acção do colonialismo e a forma de libertação dos povos colonizados.)

Silenciaste minha razão
Na razão das tuas leis
Sufocaste minha cultura
Na cultura da tua cultura
Abafaste minhas revoltas
Com a ponta da tua baioneta
Torturaste meu corpo
Nos grilhões do teu império
Subjugaste minha alma
Na fé da tua religião

Saqueaste
Assassinaste
Massacraste
Pilhaste

Minha terra, minha gente
Banhada em sangue
Escorraçada, exangue

Barbaramente civilizaste na demagogia da tua grei
Brutalmente colonizaste na embição da tua grandeza

Na ponta da baioneta
Assinalaste o rasto da tua passagem
Na ponta da minha baioneta
Marcarei na história a forma da minha

Libertação

Assassins

(Poetry on the action of colonialism is a form of liberty
for colonised peoples.)

Silence my reason
 In the reason of your laws
Suffocate my culture
 In the culture of your culture
Smother my revolts
 With the point of your bayonet
Torture my body
 With the chains of your empire
Subjugate my soul
 With the faith of your religion

Plunderers
Assassins
Murderers
Robbers

My land, my people
Bathed in blood,
Drained, exhausted

Barbarous civilisers: a nation of demagogues
Brutal colonialists: an empire of pillagers

In the point of the bayonet
 Is carved the trail of your progress
In the point of my bayonet
 Is carved the history and the form of my

liberation

O Povo Maubere não pode ser Escravo de mais ninguém

I

É preciso
viver
e sentir
p'ra esquecer-se
e o povo
servir

II

É preciso
lutar
p'ra vencer
e acabar
com o medo
servil

III

É preciso
este solo
regar
com suor
com amor
a estrumar

IV

É preciso
este povo
ensinar
p'ra entender
quem o quer
explorar

The Maubere People will Never be Slaves Again

I
We must
nourish
a new life
to forget
that our people
were slaves

II
We must
struggle
in conquest
of fear
that comes
from slavery

III
We must
irrigate
this soil
with sweat,
with love
fertilise it

IV
We must
teach
our people
what is
the cause
of exploitation

V
É preciso
fazer
despontar
deste solo
calcado
o homem nove

VI
É preciso
destruir
e acabar
com o peso
e opressão
colonial

É PRECISO GRITAR BEM ALTO
QUE O POVO DE TIMOR
QUE O POVO MAUBERE
NÃO PODE SER ESCRAVO
DE MAIS NINGUÉM

DE MAIS NINGUÉM
DE MAIS NINGUÉM
DE MAIS NINGUÉM

V
We must
from this
trodden
trampled soil
create
a new person

VI
We must
throw off
the fear,
the weight
of colonial
oppression

WE MUST SHOUT ALOUD
THAT THE PEOPLE OF TIMOR
THAT THE MAUBERE PEOPLE
WILL NEVER BE SLAVES AGAIN

NO ONE
NOT ANYONE
NEVER ANYONE AGAIN

Hatene Hodi Hakarak

I

Maun-alin alin-maun sé tilun mai
Oh! rona, maun-alin sira, oh!

II

Ita mesa oa kiak mesa ema kiak
Mesa mesa oa kiak mesa ema kiak

III

Tan sá, tan sé, tan bá sá,
Tan sá, tan sé, tan bá sé,

IV

Tan matan ema taka neon ema taka
Tan ema taka dalan ema deo dalan

V

Neon atu nakloke matan atu haré
Ita sei haré ita sei hakarak

VI

Atu sei hakarak ita sei hatene
Hatene tan sá ita nu'u ne'e hela

Tradução Livre:

I

Irmãos escutai
Ouvi, irmãos:

II

Somos filhos de gente pobre, somos gente necessitada
Todos de gente necessitada, todos de gente pobre

III

Por quê, por quem, por causa de quê?
Por quê, por quem, por causa de quem?

IV

Porque nos vendaram os olhos e nos impediram de pensar
Porque cancelaram e obstruíram o nosso caminho

V

Para pensarmos livremente e olharmos mais além
Temos que ver e temos que querer

VI

Para sabermos querer temos que saber
Saber a razão porque estamos assim

Poor People

I

Elder brothers and younger brothers, listen
Oh! Listen, brothers, oh!

II

We are but poor children, but poor people
But poor children, but poor people

III

Why, how, for whom is it thus?
For whom? how? why?

IV

Our people's eyes have been closed,
Their minds have been closed

V

To open our minds, to open our eyes
We must search, we must find the will

VI

To find the will, we must understand
Why we are as we are: poor people

Kolele Mai

Kolê lele mai rade kokodelê kôle le mai
Kolê lele mai rade kokodelê kôle hele laloi kôlele mai

I
Sá sá ha'a nalo ó batar la fulin
Sá sá ha'a nalo ó hare la burit

II
Sé sé ha'a nalo ó kabun la bosu
Sé sé ha'a nalo ó kosar la maran

III
Balu dehan ó baruk balu katak ó beik
Balu ra'ak ó baruk balu katak ó kiak

IV
Sá sá ha'a nalo?
Sé sé sé lós sé?

Tradução Livre:

I
Qual é a causa porque o teu milho não espiga
Qual é a causa porque o teu arroz não floresce

II
Qual é a causa da tua fome
Qual é a causa do teu suor sem fim

III
Há quem diga que a causa de tudo isso é a tua preguiça
e a tua estupidez
Há quem diga que a causa de tudo isso é a tua preguiça
e a tua pobreza

IV
Qual é a causa de tudo isso?
Quem exactamente é o causador? ...

Kolele Mai: What is the Reason?

Kolê lele mai rade kokodelê kôle le mai
Kolê lele mai rade kokodelê kôle hele laloi kôlele mai

I
What is it that makes your corn not grow?
What is it that makes your rice not flower?

II
What is it that makes your stomach not full?
What is it that makes your sweat not dry?

III
Some say you are lazy, some say you are stupid
Some say it is stupidity, others say it is poverty

IV
What is the reason for it?
Who, who, is really responsible?

Poesia de apelo à unidade do Povo

Kdadalak

I

Kdadalak suli mutuk fila ué inan
Ué inan tan malu sá ben ta'han

II

Nanu'u timur oan sei hamutuk
Hamutuk atu tahan anin sut taci

III

Anin sut sut taci sut kabala
Sut ita mata laran ita kotuk laran

IV

Sut ita lun turu ita kosar turu
Susu ita rai bokur ita isi bokur

V

KDADALAK SULI MUTUK FILA UÉ INAN
TIMUR OAN HAMUTUK TANE ITA RAIN

Tradução Livre:

I

Regatos convergindo transformam-se em rios
Os rios juntando-se qual a força que se lhes opõe

II

Assim os timores devem juntar-se
Devem unir-se para se oporem ao vento que sopra do mar

III

O vento que sopra do mar fustiga o kabala
Fere a vista e martiriza o dorso

IV

Faz as lágrimas e o suor rolares pelo chão
Suga a gordura da nossa terra e dos nossos corpos

V

Regatos convergindo transformam-se em rios
TIMORES UNIDOS ERGAMOS A NOSSA TERRA

A poem calling for unity of the people

Streams

Refrain:

Ó hele ó, o hele olé, ó hele lê,
Ó hele ó, ó hele ó hele lé hele ó

I

Streams flowing together become rivers
Rivers increase, whatever opposes them

II

So must the children of Timor unite,
Unite against the wind blowing from the sea

III

The sea wind whips the *kabala*
Whips our eyes bloody, our backs bloody

IV

Makes our tears roll down, our sweat flow down
Sucks the fat of our earth, the fat of our bodies

V

Streams flowing together become rivers
CHILDREN OF TIMOR — UNITED, RECLAIM OUR LAND!

O Grito do Soldado Maubere

SEGUNDA-FEIRA

Alta madrugada
II de Agosto
Repentinamente
O silêncio da noite
Foi quebrado
Por tiros de espingarda.
Indivíduos armados
Transportando-se em carros
Provocam tiroteio ensurdecedor
Fazem prisões arbitrárias
Assaltam a PSP por obra e graça do seu Comandante
Matam à traição soldados de 2º Linha
Saqueiam
E incompreensivelmente
As autoridades
O Governo
Cruzam descansadamente os braços
E nada fazem
Para impedir os abusos
Ou defender os indefesos

TERÇA-FEIRA

O povo maubere é perseguido
Amarrado
Espancado
Por esses vândalos da UDT
Que se baptizam de anti-comunistas
E O GOVERNO CONTINUA A CRUZAR OS BRAÇOS

The Cry of the Maubere Soldier

MONDAY

In the early hours
of August 11
suddenly
the silence of the night
is ruptured
by rifle fire.
Armed individuals
cruising in cars
orchestrate
a deafening barrage,
arbitrarily seize prisoners,
attack the PSP (with the grace of its Commander),
murder soldiers of the 2nd line,
pillage.
Amazingly
the authorities
the Government,
nonchalantly folds its arms
and does nothing
to halt the abuses,
to defend the defenceless.

TUESDAY

The Maubere people are persecuted
chained
beaten
by the UDT vandals
who baptise themselves anti-Communists.
THE GOVERNOR FOLDS HIS ARMS

QUARTA-FEIRA

Em vários pontos do nosso território
Aumentam as prisões
Agravam as agressões
E à barbárie
E ao vandalismo
Da reacçãoária UDT
E seus lacaios criminosos
Se denomina de
Movimento Revolucionário Anti-Comunista de 11 de Agosto
Violando jovens, mulheres e crianças
Matando esposas e filhos de meses
De militantes da FRETILIN
E O GOVERNO CONTINUA A CRUZAR OS BRAÇOS

QUINTA-FEIRA

O Governo continua a cruzar os braços
E cinicamente
E hipocritamente
E sadicamente
E criminosamente
E traiçoeiramente
Quer sentar o criminoso
Com a vítima ensanguentada
O carrasco armada
Com o representante do povo desarmado

SEXTA-FEIRA

Mais saques
Mais violações
Mais incêndios de palhotas
Semeando o terror
Espalhando a morte
A destruição
A miséria
O caos . . .
E O GOVERNO CONTINUA A CRUZAR OS BRAÇOS

WEDNESDAY

In all corners of the land
the prisons fill,
the assault intensifies
at the hands
of the barbarians,
the vandals,
the reactionary UDT
and its criminal lackeys
of the denomination

Revolutionary Anti-Communist Movement of August 11
who rape the innocents,
murder the wives, the children
of the FRETILIN soldiers.

STILL THE GOVERNOR FOLDS HIS ARMS

THURSDAY

Still the Governor folds his arms
and cynically
hypocritically
sadistically
criminally
treacherously
depicts the criminal
as a bloodied victim,
the armed executioner
as the representative of the unarmed people.

FRIDAY

More lootings
more rape,
palhotas burn,
the terror spreads,
broadcasting death
destruction
misery
chaos . . .

STILL THE GOVERNOR FOLDS HIS ARMS

SÁBADO

O crime alastra-se por todo o território
O povo é escoraçado
Ou jogado em chacinas fraticidas
Pilhas de cadáveres
Mergulham em rios de sangue
Roldão de fumos negros
Escurecem os céus de Timor
Espalhando o cheiro de corpos queimados
Em palhotas incendiadas por ordem da criminoso UDT
E O GOVERNO CONTINUA A CRUZAR OS BRAÇOS

DOMINGO ... SEGUNDA ... E TERÇA-FEIRA

Os comandos militares são atraídos para o conlúio criminoso
E tentam enganar os soldados mauberes
Ao silêncio assassino
Com a cantilena colonialista do a-p-a-r-t-i-d-a-r-i-s-m-o
Enquanto os homens
As mulheres
As crianças
Os bebés mauberes
Vão tombando em pocas de sangue
Atravessados pelas balas assassinas
Dos carrascos da UDT
Que ao vergonhoso assassinio
Chamam de Movimento Revolucionário de 11 de Agosto.
O soldado maubere pede justiça
Reclama pelo sangue dos seus
E O GOVERNO CONTINUA A CRUZAR OS BRACOS

SATURDAY

Crimes litter the land,
the people flee
or are drawn into fratricidal carnage.
Corpses mount,
soaking in bloody rivers.
In the confusion of black smoke
Timor's skies darken,
the stench of burning bodies drifts
from the flaming *palhotas*,
fired by order of the UDT gangsters.

STILL THE GOVERNOR FOLDS HIS ARMS

SUNDAY . . . MONDAY . . . AND TUESDAY

The colonial leaders fret at 'the criminal conspiracy,'
work to trick the Maubere soldiers
to a murderous silence
with empty colonial songs of a-p-a-r-t-i-d-a-r-i-s-m-o
while the men
the women
the children
the Maubere infants
die in pools of blood,
pierced by the murderous bullets
of that murderous crew
called the Revolutionary Movement of August 11.
The Maubere soldier is crying for justice,
paying with his blood
and that of his people.

STILL THE GOVERNOR FOLDS HIS ARMS

QUARTA-FEIRA — 20 DE AGOSTO

O sangue vertido
Não deixou de ecoar
Nas veias dos soldados mauberes
E o soldado maubere
Ergueu a sua espingarda
E sacudiu das suas costas
O peso da criminosa influência
Dos galões colonialistas
 Saiu à rua
 Em defesa do Povo Maubere
 Enfrentou as balas assassinas
 Encurralou os criminosos
 E enchendo o coração de estoicidade heróica
 Gritou
 — NAO ao assassinio
 — NAO ao colonialismo
 — NAO às garras dos vândalos na carne do Povo Maubere
 e no solo de Timor-Leste

**SIM com FRETILIN
para a LIBERTACÃO TOTAL**

WEDNESDAY – AUGUST 20

The spilt blood
still throbs
in the veins of the Maubere soldier.
Stirring,
lifting his rifle,
shaking from his shoulders
the criminal influence of colonial thought
he takes to the streets
– to defend the Maubere people
– to confront the assassins' bullets
and
girding his heart to courage
he cries
– NO to the murderers
– NO to colonialism
– NO to the rape of the Maubere people
and the soil of Timor Loro Sae

YES to FRETILIN
for TOTAL LIBERATION!

Um Minuto de Silêncio

Calai
Montes
Vales e fontes
Regatos e ribeiros
Pedras dos caminhos
E ervas do chão,
Calai

Calai
Pássaros do ar
E ondas do mar
Ventos que sopram
Nas praias que sobram
De terras de ninguém,
Calai

Calai
Canas e bambus
Árvores e 'ai-rús'
Palmeiras e capim
Na verdura sem fim
Do pequeno Timor,
Calai

One Minute of Silence

Be silent
mountains
valleys and springs
rivers and streams
stony ways
and grassy reaches,
be silent

Be silent
birds of the air
and waves of the sea
winds that blow
on sands that flow
in lands that no-one owns,
be silent

Be silent
canes and bamboos
bushes and eucalypts
palms and grasses
endless verdure
of tiny Timor,
be silent

Calai
Calai-vos e calemo-nos

POR UM MINUTO

E tempo de silêncio
No silêncio do tempo
Ao tempo de vida
Dos que perderam a vida

PELA PATRIA
PELA NAÇÃO
PELO POVO
PELA NOSSA
LIBERTAÇÃO

CALAI – UM MINUTO DE SILÊNCIO . . .

Be silent
your silence, our silence
FOR ONE MINUTE

It is a time for silence
for the silenced time
for the life times lost
the lives given

FOR THE HOMELAND
FOR THE NATION
FOR THE PEOPLE
FOR OUR
LIBERATION

BE SILENT — ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE . . .

Hino Nacional

**Pátria, Pátria!
Timor-Leste, nossa Nação
Glória ao Povo e aos heróis
Da nossa Libertação.
Vencemos o colonialismo
Gritamos, abaixo o Imperialismo
Terra livre, Povo livre
Não, não, não, à exploração.
Avante unidos
Firmes e decididos
Na luta contra o Imperialismo
O inimigo dos Povos
Até à vitória final
Pelo caminho da Revolução.
Pátria, Pátria!
Timor-Leste, nossa Nação
Glória ao Povo e aos heróis
Da nossa Libertação.**

Homeland, Homeland!

Homeland, homeland!
East Timor, our nation
Glory to the people and the heroes
of our liberation.
Vanquish colonialism!
Down with imperialism:
a country free, a people free,
No, no, no to exploitation!
Advance united
firm and decisive
in the struggle against imperialism —
the enemy of the people —
to the final victory
by the revolutionary road.
Homeland, homeland!
East Timor, our nation
Glory to the people and the heroes
of our liberation.

Notes on the Poems

Foho Ramelau: Mount Ramelau is the highest of East Timor's mountains, around 3000 metres, and was the highest point in the Portuguese colonial empire.

In some versions, the last two lines of the first stanza ('Why, Timor, do your children doze like chickens . . .') do not appear—words are not 'fixed' in this tradition, but may be included or omitted at will.

kuda: the distinctive Timorese pony; under Portuguese colonial rule, Timorese were obliged to lead the horses of colonial officials.

Abilio de Araujo, who wrote the music for 'Foho Ramelau,' has written, in notes to the song:

'Consecrated by FRETILIN as the hymn of the revolution, this song has been propagated from the cities to the most hidden *knuas** of East Timor.

'It is inspired by the natural form and language of the poetry of Timor and is a call for a grand struggle for liberty comparable to the majesty of Mount Ramelau.

'The first four lines are a call for the liberty of the Timorese people who during centuries have always lived with their heads bowed, in contrast to the towering summit of the mountain

raised grandly above the immense mountain chains of East Timor.

'In the second stanza, the emphasis is on the significant term 'Rai hun mutin,' which is to say, 'to dawn.' 'Rai hun' means in Tetum the foot of the mountain and 'mutin' is 'to whiten.' In effect, the dawn of day presents the form of the mountain as it emerges from the black of the night in which it was firmly wrapped. That is, it is a symbol of the colonial night which heralds a new day — the day of liberty — which arrives in the villages and therefore the whole of Timor.

'The melody line unfolds in the pentatonic scale which is generally the base of the popular songs of Timor and frames the musical universe of the people of Timor.'

'**knuas* are agglomerations of houses where people of the same family live; an extended family at various times includes a large number of relatives — to sixty persons or more.'

Hatene Hodi Hakarak: As in 'Kolele Mai,' the third stanza ('Why, how, for whom is it thus? . . .') employs a standard rhetorical device. Pausing in the discourse, the storyteller recapitulates by putting rhetorical questions to the audience.

Kolele Mai: The 'Kolele Mai' is a popular song form from the Baucau region. Of songs in this genre, Abilio de Araujo has commented: 'all of these songs express the life of a people who know the poverty of a society based on exploitation. All of them have a profound significance which deserves discussion and debate, just as these verses are the demonstration of a material life which is not separate from social and political factors.'

Kdadalak: *kabala*: a garment worn by Timorese men, caught at the waist.

'As with 'Foho Ramelau,' the poetry of 'Kdadalak' is an example of metaphorical language. It is a call for the unity of

all Timorese in which their power is compared to the streams. It is the unity necessary to withstand “the wind which blows from the sea,” expressing a reference to foreign forces — colonialism and imperialism — which during long centuries of unbridled exploitation have left a legacy of misery and poverty, symbolised here in the *kabala* . . . The music is written in the pentatonic scale, inspired mainly by the songs of the *tebe* — a Timorese dance — which always presents the simple refrain “O hele ô . . .”, a refrain for which there is no exact translation.’ (Notes by Abilio de Araujo.)

O Grito do Soldado Maubere: This prose poem gives a chronological account of events following the coup of August 11, 1975 in Dili, staged by the União Democrática Timorense (UDT). FRETILIN did not take up arms against UDT until a week after the coup: the first orders to counterattack went out from the FRETILIN command in Aileu on August 18, FRETILIN soldiers in Dili moved on August 20. In the intervening week, described here, Portuguese authorities took no action against the UDT leaders who arrested, jailed and killed FRETILIN leaders and supporters until the retaliation of August 20.

FIRST STANZA

attack the PSP (with the grace of its Commander): the police headquarters. It was with the complicity of the Portuguese police commander, Lieut.-Col. Maggiolo Gouveia, that UDT was able to carry out the coup of August 11.

soldiers of the 2nd line: the Timorese conscript soldiers who formed the majority of the Portuguese army in East Timor.

THIRD STANZA

Revolutionary Anti-Communist Movement of August 11: the Revolutionary Anti-Communist Movement of August 11 (MACR) was a creation of the UDT coup, and was a ‘front’ which embraced three other parties: KOTA (the Sons of the Mountain Warriors) a party which appealed to the most

conservative of the local traditional power-holders and had a following of a couple of hundred members, Trabalhista, an East Timorese 'Labor Party,' with less than ten adherents, and a section of APODETI (Associação Popular Democrática Timorense), the minority pro-Indonesian integration party. The concept of MACR was possibly a specific creation of Jakarta – the UDT coup followed a visit to Jakarta by UDT leaders, who only returned to East Timor on August 8.

FIFTH STANZA

palhotas: traditional straw huts.

SEVENTH STANZA

a-p-a-r-t-i-d-i-s-m-o: a tenet of the ideology of Portugal's Armed Forces Movement (MFA), which holds that the military must be separate from politics. The Portuguese administration in Timor, which largely consisted of MFA officers, tried to convince the Timorese soldiers that they should not intervene against UDT. FRETILIN leaders spent the week of August 11-20 urging the soldiers that they must take action to defend their people – as 'true sons of Timor' they could not be 'apart' from what was happening.

EIGHTH STANZA

Timor Loro Sae: East Timor (Tetum).

Um Minuto de Silêncio: First published in the post-independence issue of the newspaper *Timor Leste*, which appeared three days before the Indonesian assault on Dili, 'one minute of silence' refers to the declaration of independence on November 28, when one minute of silence was observed for those who had died in the fight for independence. It was thus written in the days between November 28 and December 4.

Hino Nacional: This is the national anthem of the Democratic Republic of East Timor which was performed publicly for the first time at the declaration of East Timor's independence in Dili, November 28, 1975.

Further Reading

Abilio de Araujo, *Timorese Elites*, Canberra 1975.*

Margaret Dickinson (translator), *When Bullets begin to Flower: Poems of Resistance from Angola, Mozambique and Guiné*, East African Publishing House, Kenya, 1972.

Grant Evans, 'Portuguese Timor', *New Left Review*, 91, May/June 1975.

Helen Hill, *The Timor Story*, Timor Information Service, Melbourne 1976.*

J.F. Ormeling, *The Timor Problem: a Geographical Interpretation of an Underdeveloped Island*, J.B. Wolters, Jakarta 1957.

*Available from Timor Information Service.

The cover design is drawn from the symbolism of the red, black, yellow and white flag of the Democratic Republic of East Timor, in which a black triangle symbolises four hundred years of obscurantism under Portuguese colonialism. Centred on the triangle is a white star, representing hope.